

Think with the head and act with the 'heart'

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WHILE the situation in a neighbouring country is deteriorating, Malaysians must be vigilant and ensure that our country doesn't suffer the same fate. There are lessons to be learnt from what is happening there.

Already, the common people here are facing challenges to make ends meet. Any disturbances will exacerbate the situation and it must be avoided at all cost.

Sectarian and individual ambitions should not take preference over society's well-being as this could create even more anxieties and, God forbid, may even lead to violence.

We have just celebrated our 51st Merdeka in peace. And there was the impressive muhibah gathering attended by more than 300 leaders from various communities, with our prime minister officiating.

The use of the word muhibah, which was once given prominence during the days of the earlier prime ministers, has now almost gone into oblivion. Muhibah was often associated with durian parties then.

Muhibah must be closely linked to matters of the heart, the innate seed of human dignity and oneness.

It is often the heart that decides in transcending all barriers that divide fellow human beings.

For example, shallow socio-political expediencies have broken many a heart as family ties are destroyed. If this can happen to families, where the heart binds more strongly, we cannot imagine what it will do to a fragmented nation of "strangers".

We can fairly predict that political and ideological divisiveness can only cause further division as a result of hypocritical calls for unity among Malaysians, more fashionably calling for a "bangsa Malaysia".

At this juncture, it is apt to share the profound saying of Prophet Muhammad alluding to the importance of an "organ" which, if good, permeates throughout the person and similarly if it is bad.

That organ is the heart, metaphorically speaking. Hence the common description of the "good-hearted" or "cold-hearted". The saying goes, think with the head and act with the heart.

In times when the quest for "truth" is riddled with uncertainties, the heart often acts as the compass to bring us nearer the "truth", something that only the person and God can ascertain.

In Malay culture, there is a great reliance on "*mata hati*", loosely translated as the "heart's eye" as in the "mind's eye".

This, however, can only be discernible in those who care to tend to their hearts. If we have little time for this, not only literally speaking but more so metaphorically, we can be carried away by acts intended to divide.

This may skew the purpose of "blogging" as bluffing, lying and obscene gossiping, without any qualms or dignity.

Let us be reminded that the present "division" plaguing the neighbouring country involves a singular group of people predominantly sharing the same faith, belief, culture and values. It is their politics, in the name of "democracy", that is tearing them asunder.

So let us not be too quick to blame everything on "religion" and "faith".

In another country, thousands of monks launched a massive protest against their leaders for allegedly "suppressing" their religion.

All these must alert us to how much more sensitive we must be in articulating and navigating our political and democratic aspirations.

This is especially so for those who have hidden agendas that only their hearts (and God) can tell.

Time and again, it has been demonstrated that deception in matters of the "heart" has a way of boomeranging back on those who are callous.

Lest we learn how to cleanse our hearts (read: sincere and trustworthy), we will continue to struggle in futility

and pain against our own conscience.

The best way to safeguard its sanctity is by meditating and fasting, and for the Muslims it is during this Ramadan month.

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